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TO : Chief, Estimates Staff

DATE: 26 July 1951

FROM : R. L. Hewitt

SUBJECT: Revision of NIE-23

I hate to take a negative attitude toward the changes you suggested in NIE-23 but the fact remains that I have serious reservations about the major points involved. I have discussed the question briefly with [] and Chet Cooper, both of whom had generally similar reactions.

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My principal concern is about the conclusions. I hold no brief for the precise wording I used; there is no reason to believe it could not be improved. I do feel, however, that the alternate conclusions you drafted tend to be oversimplified and misleading.

- a. Paragraphs 1-4 represent a restatement of my paragraphs 1-2 but leave out the (to me) important statements for guidance of policy-makers that the present regime cannot be won for the West in the short run but will not join up with the Soviets either.
- b. In your paragraph 3, I would place economic difficulties ahead of political splits as a threat to stability. The probability is that the Congress Party -- though subject to increasing internal friction -- will continue in power for several years unless felled by economic unrest. India appears to be moving toward a multi-party system on the Greek model rather than toward the political chaos of an Iran.
- c. Paragraph 4 states the Communist threat too bluntly. The Communist threat is a potential one.
- d. Paragraph 5 appears to me to be misleading. The implication is that India's internal instability will cause it to commit itself to the West. US policy-makers should rather be told that (1) India will accept US economic aid, (2) such aid will have no immediate effect on Indian foreign policy, though there is a chance that India might eventually abandon neutrality to stay on the gravy train, and (3) there is a strong case for extending economic aid to India even though it will not sign up with the West. Paragraph 6 (the latter part of my paragraph 4) is merely an attempt to point out that extension of aid represents a gamble that should be recognized as such. Incidentally, your paragraph 6 also represents an overstatement. A non-Communist regime might be able to stay in power for a long time without India's achieving lasting stability -- a good case in point is Greece or even the UK.

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With regard to other points:

- a. The statement of the problem as: "To estimate the present and probable future foreign policy of the present regime in India" narrows the field too much. The real question is not India's foreign policy in general but its relationship to the East-West conflict. Moreover, the paper is also concerned with whether the present regime will be displaced by the Communists.
- b. The discussion of the political situation can be expanded some, though the situation is too nebulous to make a firm estimate as to the elections if and when they are held; the chances are that the Congress Party machine will defeat the leftist dissidents. It should be noted, however, that the political situation is important primarily as it affects foreign policy and that our estimate is that foreign policy will remain relatively unchanged regardless of which non-Communist faction calls the tune. In this connection, the meticulous attribution of views to the Indian Government rather than to India is unnecessary and even misleading.
- c. I wonder whether the Board and the IAC would wish to cut down the Strategic Importance section -- though I concede that no reliable intelligence technique has as yet been devised for predicting the intentions of these august bodies.

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